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From W^t. Hazard, printer
at Bath - by the author before

A P P E A L
(Anonymous) with an offer of a Key.

T O T H E

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,
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ON THE SUBJECT

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION;

After a three years experiment of its effects;

With a particular address to the **ORTHODOX DISSENTERS**,

And to the Clergy of the Establishment.

by the Revd Dr. Hawke. Rector of Charles'
Parish - Plymouth

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

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AN APPEAL, &c.

THE French revolution, and the events involved in it, have awakened the attention of all Europe. It is impossible indeed, but that an object of such magnitude should excite universal regard. So vast an empire as France, whose importance in the rank of kingdoms, and whose general operations, have for the most part, uniformly regulated the systems of other European powers for many centuries past, in their dispositions to peace, or war; could not have been thrown into such mighty convulsions, without proportionably agitating neighbouring states. As it might well be expected therefore, the surrounding nations have felt the concussion, and been necessarily alarmed by the shock. And while the attention of *public bodies*, hath been excited to watch its progress, with sedulous care and anxiety: *individuals* no less from their private and personal interest, have been compelled to regard it, with suitable apprehensions and concern. And

however differently it may have appeared, according to the different mediums through which it hath been viewed ; all, have concurred in this one opinion concerning it, that it is pregnant with the most interesting consequences, both to persons, and to society.

In the first paroxysms of disorder which the revolution occasioned, the subject was too vast and complicated, to be brought under any accurate decision, what the termination might be. The friends of it indeed were very confident, of its eventual happy consequences. And it was at one time pretty much the custom in this country, among a certain class of people, to speak of it in the highest terms of panegyric. France, it was said, would now ascend the summit of glory, and the day was approaching, when from the plenitude of power she would possess, she might give laws to all Europe. These were among the eulogies trumpeted from every mouth, and echoing from all quarters. But though the short interval of three years hath hardly elapsed, since the commencement of the revolution, so fickle and precarious is the voice of praise, that I should think it impossible to find a single person even among its warmest partisans, hardy enough to avow, that events have in any manner corresponded to his expectation,

expectation, or that the circumstances have turned out just as he could have wished. Though the revolution for the time blazed like a meteor, and dazzled the eyes of the admiring multitude, yet its glittering was but momentary, and soon died away. And the consequence indeed which followed, hath been found not unsimilar, to the effects which the fiery exhalations raised from the earth by heat, frequently induce. Inviting by a false light, the incautious traveller from the highway of safety, into pathless tracks, which the imagination forms to his mistaken view ; at length when the vapour disappears, the deluded wanderer is left, amidst all the horrors of darkness, and the innumerable dangers with which he is surrounded, to mourn over his infatuation, and to regret the folly of his pursuit. Such is the very melancholy situation at present of the people of France ! What numberless instances no doubt might be found there, could their history be brought forward to public view, to exemplify the fact ! How infinite the sorrows, and the heart-achs, which the revolution hath introduced, amidst the various circles of private life ! How has the ardor of enthusiasm, in the mad pursuit of fancied freedom, been followed with the loss of all real liberty ! And how have we seen, some of the most clamorous in their shouts of *vive la*

revolution almost in the moment of their transports, become martyrs to the *guillotine*.

But notwithstanding these effects are so palpably induced by the change of government in France; notwithstanding that change hath proved the very reverse of what it proudly promised; and hath already been productive of such serious evils in every department of the kingdom, that perhaps not an individual in it, whom if he dared to acknowledge the real sentiments of his heart, but would confess, that it was his most earnest wishes, the revolution had never taken place: it is a fact, which cannot be dissembled with truth, nor owned but with pain; there are not wanting persons, in this land of freedom and happiness, who would be glad to make the same mad experiment, of subverting our most excellent constitution; and are secretly cherishing the hope, that a similar commotion may shortly be induced among us. That the unprincipled and licentious, men of desperate fortunes, and no characters, should wish to introduce uproar and anarchy into a state, that in the common scramble, they, who had nothing to lose, might gather from their neighbours property; cannot be an object of surprise. But that persons of integrity and honor, who ought to be above the influence of vulgar prejudices, should really countenance

countenance a measure, which no feeling mind can contemplate but with horror; and especially with the recent example now before our eyes, of the miseries of the French nation induced by it, which for greatness beggars all description; I say, that any friend to mankind, could wish such an event to take place, and secretly put forth an helping hand to promote it, this is at once as unaccountable, as it is contradictory to all virtuousness of principle, and can only be referred into an apprehension, either, that the minds of such persons are not thoroughly aware of the moral turpitude of the action; or, it must be considered as an additional evidence what strong contrarieties of disposition, are blended in the same breast; and how many strange inconsistencies are frequently found uniting, to make up the human character. Presuming, however, that with minds of the former description, the matter needs only to be coolly and candidly considered, to induce better sentiments; I have ventured to make an appeal to the people of England upon the subject, and am led to hope, from the well known good sense and generosity of my Countrymen, that whatever the event of my application may be, if I am not happy enough to convince by the strength of argument, I shall not displease by the mode of reasoning. If I know myself, my motives are too pure

to give disgust, and my endeavors too humble to offend. The sole object which I have in view, is by a few plain observations, on the principles of the French revolution, as it now appears, to demonstrate from facts and experience, the fallacy of the doctrine; in order to deter the minds of my Countrymen from the imitation of an example so fatal. The present moment must be considered as peculiarly favourable to this purpose. An earlier appeal, could not have been made, with the advantages which we now possess. An interval of several years, since the onset of the commotion, has now afforded ample space, for fair trial, and in that trial, sufficient evidence of truths appears, to enable the mind, to form a clear and decisive calculation of the whole. We stand now therefore, as upon a rising ground, in the field of observation. We speak from real matters of fact, and draw our conclusions from somewhat more than mere conjecture or probability. So that judging by events, (which must be allowed upon all occasions, to be the truest standard of decision, when attainable,) the experiment which France has made, in the doctrine of revolutions, holds forth an admirable lesson to every other nation, and it should seem to be but the common policy of an enlightened people, to profit by it.

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That the approbation, with which the first accounts of the revolution in France, was received in this kingdom, proceeded from the purest, and most laudable motives, I can very readily believe. Indeed, I would give credit to the generous feelings of my Countrymen upon the occasion, and say, I am persuaded, that their sentiments, were the sentiments of the noblest philanthropy. Britons, preeminent in every amiable propensity of nature, could not but rejoice, in the first dawning of freedom, on a land, which had so many ages, lain under oppression: and feeling the impulse of the most benevolent affection, they were led to congratulate a kingdom, emerging from the darkness around it, into the day of light and liberty, which they themselves had so long enjoyed. While the demolition of the *Bastile*, and the suppression of *Lettres Cachet*, afforded the most gratifying pleasures, to all the friends of humanity; men of religion, no less, were led to hope, that the deadly blow given to popery, in the destruction of those engines of its power, might be considered as a pleasing presage of the total overthrow which might shortly be expected to follow, that anti-christian heresy. From such a view of things therefore, they anticipated the prospect of a great nation, under the auspices of a reformed government, arising to the blessings of a free people:

ple; and beheld in idea the French nation, already in possession of the happiness, which Englishmen for ages had enjoyed. It ceases then to be an object of wonder, that actuated with such sentiments, the breasts of our humane and generous countrymen, should feel the glow of satisfaction in the moment when the change of government first took place in France.

It must be confessed indeed that they among them, who looked deeper into the subject, than the mere surface, were not so sanguine in their expectations, but a considerable degree of doubt and suspicion mingled with their hopes. They were unable to reconcile the prospect of a peaceable and happy termination, with the beginning of such violence and strife. They could not but secretly apprehend also, that the great events proposed, were too mighty to be accomplished, by instruments so feeble and disproportioned, as the first authors of the revolution appeared to be. And besides, neither the *means*, nor the *method*, by which the government changed its rulers, were conducted with that regard to wisdom and rectitude, and order, from whence a well founded hope of a divine blessing might be expected. And though the ostensible and professed object of the revolution seemed to indicate success, yet when they

they contemplated the characters of the persons, most active in the arduous undertaking, they could not but tremble, for the eventual consequences.

Time, that great arbiter of all doubtful occurrences, hath settled the point; and shewn the fallacy of the humane man's hopes, more than realizing the wise man's fears. The three years unexampled in history, of bloodshed and murder, which hath already taken place, in that most wretched of all countries, (to say nothing of the boundless prospect still opening before it) hath fully demonstrated, the error, in which Frenchmen have been involved. And in the daring attempts made upon all religion, as well as upon all regal government, is abundantly manifested, the baleful source, from whence the whole springs. It is obvious, that it was not barely to dethrone Kings, but to deny Him *by whom Kings reign and Princes decree justice*. And in the sad effects, which have followed their unparalleled impiety, may awfully be traced, the Divine judgment treading close upon the heels of guilt, and connecting the crime with the punishment. In what numberless instances; to what extent; in what manner; and in how infinite a variety of methods; this visitation hath been manifested; who shall take

take upon him to say? The public executions and carnage of which we read, painfully as they arrest our feelings by their frequency, and the savage brutality with which they are accompanied, are nothing we may be assured to the private perpetrations of bloodshed among them. The mind sickens with horror in the contemplation, and desires to turn from a subject so infinitely distressing. Not to dwell upon it therefore, I shall only observe, that I believe it may be said, without the smallest exaggeration, since the memorable siege and destruction of Jerusalem, there is not a kingdom under heaven, whose sufferings nationally considered, have equalled the people of France, within the short period of the present revolution! And it is impossible to find any other satisfying answer, to the question which involuntarily arises in the mind, of every reflecting person, who contemplates their history, than what the Jewish law giver hath furnished to the inquiry; *wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this Land? Because they have forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.* Or as we learn from the same divine authority; *even as they did not like to retain God in knowledge, God hath given them over to a reprobate mind.*

But while the approbation, with which many amiable minds among my Countrymen, regarded
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the first openings of a change in the French government, may, and ought, with strict justice I am persuaded, be referred into the purest principles: I am sorry to be obliged to add, that their notions, ceased to be right, when they were accompanied with a desire, to propagate similar principles among the people of this land. It being impossible to trace the smallest affinity in the English form of government, to the French constitution, as it stood, antecedent to the present disturbances; nothing could be more absurd, than to transfer the doctrine of a revolution in France, (supposing that revolution justifiable) to this country. No two nations perhaps upon earth of any refinement, could be more dissimilar, in their characteristical features: in religion; in polity; in laws; in the genius of the people; in their manners, and customs; in short, in almost every point of view, by which man is diversified, in the local situations of countries. There is hardly any thing more foreign, or more opposed to each other, than are the general traits of character which distinguish the French from the English people. Can there be any possible resemblance, between despotism and freedom: between the absolute power of the Prince, and a limited monarchy: between the folly of popery and the wisdom of protestantism? And yet these things, must be all proved

proved to be perfectly analogous, before the change of government, which has taken place in France, can be brought as a proper reason, or precedent, to justify the expediency of similar measures, being adopted in this country.

Nay, the very argument, which ascribes wisdom in the one instance, demonstrates at the same time, the folly of it, when applied to the other. And it is difficult to conceive, any higher compliment of an indirect nature, could be paid to the freedom of a state, than was shewn to ours, in the avowed purposes of the revolution, to enjoy the same privileges. The very first arm, which was lifted for the destruction of the *Bastile*, no less displayed thereby, the happiness of that country where no *Bastile* stands: where no prison is found, to confine the most worthless of its subjects unheard; but where the person of the Peasant, is as much secured from the hand of lawless violence, as the person of the Prince: and where no man can be deprived, either of life or liberty, but from the clearest conviction of his crimes, and under the fairest and fullest trial, of an impartial jury. As these are truths notoriously known, and which no one of common candor can deny, it is surely unaccountable, that the propriety of a change, in the government in this country, should

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be contended for, by a parity of reasoning, from the French nation: and I cannot but think that the idea must have originated, in some latent principles of the mind, and not of the most amiable nature. I would beg to ask such persons, whether they conceive, that the French people would have wished, for a new modification of their government, had that government been such as ours now is? And whether their dissatisfaction under *their* constitution, was not become the more intolerant, from contrasting it with the freedom which they perceived Englishmen enjoyed? Nay I would further demand, is it not an undoubted truth, that the first pretences made for the subversion of the French laws, and the demand for a new constitution; was on the ground, that a system of government might be formed on the model of the English legislation? And can it be the doubt of the moment, with any candid mind, that supposing, the most violent of the members in the National Convention, had been presented with a *Carte Blanche*, in the first outrage of the revolution, to sketch the plan of government he wished, for himself, and his Countrymen; but that he would immediately have directed his thoughts to this happy country, and have drawn the outlines of that beautiful and unequalled form, which we now enjoy? How could he indeed have rejoiced,

rejoiced, to have seen settled upon a firm basis, without bloodshed, and without clamor, that very form, which *some*, who know not why, are so exceedingly dissatisfied with ; and *others*, insensible of its value, are desirous to exchange, for what the uncertainty of a revolution, shall chance to give in its place ! And can it be possible then, in the face of such plain and palpable facts, that the desire of a revolution in this kingdom, could result from pure and disinterested motives ? Could any man indeed, possessed of the lowest degree of social affection, to the body politic ; rejoice in the prospect, of the whole system being convulsed, by a seizure so deadly, which must necessarily induce a paralysis in all its members ?

Though I cannot but be led to hope, that the miseries universally sustained by the French nation, in consequence of the revolution, have tended very much, to open the eyes of my Countrymen ; and I am verily persuaded, that the number of those, who were at one time, eager to make a similar experiment, in this Country, are now considerably lessened among us ; yet, in order if possible, to do away every remaining impression, in favor of a doctrine, founded in the maddest policy ; I could wish to enter yet further into

into the subject, and meet the argument in every point of view.

There was a time, when comparative observations of the happiness of this Country, with other kingdoms, were sure to awaken a warmth of approbation in the mind: and the heart could not be led, into a train of reflections, on our advantages both civil, and religious; without instinctively being lifted into gratitude, to the Great Author of such distinguished mercies. But I know not how it is, such topics have of late, lost their relish among us. The appetite is changed. And since the *mania* of the French hath raged with such violence, many of my Countrymen have caught the infection, and the disorder hath shewn itself, by corresponding symptoms. So very much indeed, hath been the fashion of reprobating the notion of our happiness as a people, that were I to offer the plainest food of this kind, it would occasion a nausea with many, and they would turn from it with disgust.

There is a perversity in nature, sometimes, opposing the most salutary means, which would otherwise operate to its advantage; and which in order to correct, it becomes necessary, frequently to gratify the wayward humor, by apparently consenting for the moment, to what we know to be

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wrong, in order more effectually to bring about, what we know to be right. Somewhat like this, it may be necessary to observe, in the present instance. I will suppose therefore, for argument's sake, all that the most dissatisfied mind, shall wish to have supposed, unfavorable to our present form of government. Let it be said, that abuses, and errors, have crept into it. I will not stay to demand, what those abuses, and errors are; where they exist; nor in what part particularly it is, that the legislature requires a new modification. I will for once, take every thing for granted, which is complained of; and shall admit, what perhaps would require, no small difficulty to substantiate, in many instances by proof, if demanded. But after every concession of this kind, which can be made; still I must contend, and with all the warmth and earnestness, the importance of the subject renders necessary; that the idea, of accomplishing a change, beneficial in its consequences, either to persons, or society, by violence and clamor; is contrary to all principles of sound reason, and good sense. And happily for my argument, it ceases to be any longer, the mere doctrine of theory. It has been brought into complete practice, in that wretched country, by whom the experiment has been made; and the event hath afforded the most irrefragable, and decided

proofs, how incompetent it is, in the midst of anarchy and disorder, to settle principles of right, and wrong. France, stands forth, a most awful monument in history, to shew the fallacy of such attempts. And in her example, it requires but little discernment to discover, that all causes, however right, or well founded they may be, in themselves; cannot but suffer, when the management of them, is surrendered, into the hands of self-created Authority. And if in a country like France, where the great mass of the people, were all as one in seeking redress, as they had been one, in suffering; such events have followed a revolution; what may be expected in this land of freedom from the struggle, where the opposition must be proportionably greater, and more determined; in as much, as by far the majority of the people, are too sensible of their privileges, and will be too tenacious of their happiness, to intrust the correction of the evils complained of, into the hands of men of violence and faction!

But leaving these observations to the good sense of my Countrymen, my busines is to shew, that under the supposition of the errors and abuses of government, being, what they are said to be; they are such, as come not within the possibility of a revolution to amend. The great question previ-

ously to be demanded is; what are the proposed objects of a revolution? There can be but two general intentions to be accomplished by it. The *one* is, to correct the evils complained of, and still to preserve the same constitution. And the *other* is, by annihilating the whole system as it now stands, to establish a republican government, upon the ruins of monarchy.

If the *former* be the design; the very plan frustrates the intention. It can hardly escape the observation of any thinking person, the absurdity of hoping to accomplish a reform by tumult and disorder. For how should that possibly produce a reform in a state, which by snapping asunder the bands of all civil and religious compact, throws down all distinction, levels all order, and having violently unhung the government of the country, opens the door to the admission of every evil, and leaves no adequate powers to place it again on its hinges? Can any rational man look to such a cause as this, with the expectation of good? Let the abuses, and errors complained of, be what they may, (and abuses, and errors, no doubt do, and ever will, exist, in all human governments; for the very character of being human, involves in it, the imperfections with which every thing connected with human nature, must partake,) yet all

all that I am contending for, is, the utter impracticability, of hoping to accomplish any beneficial change, by an idea so chimerical, as that of a revolution. The wisdom of a state, such as the English is, certainly possesses sufficient energy in itself to correct its defects, and to that wisdom we may reasonably direct our views, with a confidence of success. But it were a folly to expect from violence, what lenient measures only can produce; or to hope from the effervescence of riot and disorder, what the coolness of deliberation alone can give. The English constitution may be compared to a fine old painting, the production of the first masters in the art. It may have suffered from the ravages of time, and its beauties may be somewhat defaced; yet no man surely, would intrust so invaluable a piece, to every pretender to the brush, or suffer the injuries it hath sustained to be mended, by the coarse daubers of the day. Nay, the very dust which hath fallen upon it, the real connoisseur would not permit to be wiped off, but with the most gentle and delicate hand. And yet there are *some* of my Countrymen, who though allowing the English form of government, to be like this painting, the finest production of human art, uniting all the collected wisdom of our ancestors in the contrivance; are nevertheless so infatuated, as to

be ready to deliver it up, to the correction of a rabble, and seem to be perfectly unapprehensive of all consequences!

But if the *other* motive be the design of the revolution, by annihilating the present system altogether, to establish republicanism on the ruins of monarchy: the *inception* is if possible yet more preposterous. It is very evident indeed that the persons who favor this opinion, are ignorant of the form of government they desire. For if they really understood, what are the most prominent features in a republic, tending to promote the people's happiness; they would have known, that in the present limited monarchy of this kingdom, they really have, what they seem to covet. The British constitution, is formed on that happy model, that (if I may be allowed the expression) it is a monarchy and a republic consolidated. For it unites with the vigor of the one, the freedom of the other, and without any infraction upon the principles of either, supports both. It is framed indeed, upon that delightful plan of civil polity, which the wisdom of antient legislators, amused themselves with planning, in idea, but never expected to have seen realized. If the motives therefore were really *pure*, among the abettors of republicanism; the avowed purposes of a revolution

tion in this country, for the accomplishment of all the beneficial effects of such a system, are done away, by the measure being in fact anticipated.

And does it not strike you my dear Countrymen, you that desire to see things impartially, and as they are; that if there be persons, who notwithstanding these palpable truths, wish a subversion of the beautiful order of government which we enjoy? it must be, because their views are not pure, but selfish, and interested? Is it not evident indeed, that their sole object cannot be to benefit their neighbour, but to aggrandize themselves? not to contribute to the happiness of the country to which they belong; but by a kind of political chemistry, having produced the heat of anarchy in the state, to convert by the means of it, public calamity, into a source of private advantage? And shall we become the dupes of such artifice and stratagem? Shall we suffer ourselves to give up the many comforts and advantages we possess, to gratify the wishes of designing men?

Men, brethren, and Fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. It requires no great degree of penetration to perceive, that the moment is critical. If a serious attention, to these important truths, be now disregarded; perhaps

the hour is not far remote, when it will be too late to regard them for ever. For when once the fence of lawful authority is broken down, by the ungovernable torrent of unprincipled faction ; like the impetuous incursion of the tide, it is impossible to prescribe limits, to the growing evil, and to say, *hitherto shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* I do not call simply upon men of fortune only, who have every thing to lose ; but I appeal to all ranks, and orders of people, for we have all every thing to fear. The poorest laborer, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, would wish to eat that bread when earned, in quietness and comfort. But who shall ensure this to him, in a state of lawless tumult and disorder, with his habitation liable to be invaded every hour ? where all private worth is unknown, and all public confidence lost ; where no man can trust his brother, and where the perpetual versatility of order, and the fluctuating situation of men and things, changing like the tints of the camelion from every surrounding object, must endanger the life of the lowest individual, whose sentiments do not always correspond with the opinion of the moment ! Is it possible in the prospect of such things, that any man can look on with unconcern, and coolly contemplate a revolution pregnant with such mighty evils ? Nay more than

than this, not only steadily behold the prospect of such events falling on this land, but be ready to put forth an helping hand to bring them forward ! Ye that are unapprehensive of any *personal* inconvenience and danger ; say, have you ever reflected on the sad uncertainty involved in contest, which sometimes sweeps away in the undistinguished mass, both friends and foes ? Have you duly considered the possibility, that the evil may extend, where least you wish it ? And will not the endearing charities, of Father, Brother, Friend, restrain the strange unnatural wish, for civil commotion ? Methinks, even the man most closely wrapped up in selfish principles, must from the consideration of personal safety alone, if he thought properly, be prompted to caution. And in the history of the French revolution, experience hath amply shewn, the danger, which attends the first promoters of daring innovation ; and particularly that degree of danger, which he of all men is most exposed to, who “ rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.” Where are the first leaders of the National Convention ? the *Briffots*, the *Petions*, the *Marats*, the *Robespierres*, and a troop of such creatures of the day ? Alas ! Time hath hardly counted three revolving suns in his journal, before that they, with thousands of a like complexion, have paid the just forfeit of their lives, to the infamy

famy of their cause. Had they foreseen the consequence, would they have engaged in the arduous enterprise? And yet they were men of the first talents, the most finished abilities, for the undertaking; proficients in all the mysteries of chicanery and intrigue. But neither talents, nor abilities, are equal to any long sway in the prosecution of a cause, founded in injustice, and supported but with blood. They are now no more. And their names if remembered, are remembered only to be execrated; and to afford so many awful examples, of admonition to mankind, that neither art, nor the most consummate human policy, when employed in the support of base measures, can long screen from that just, impending judgment of heaven, which sooner, or later, must overtake, all such workers of iniquity.



Let me hope that this train of reflections, proposed to the consideration of my Countrymen, from the calamities induced by the revolution among the French, and with a view to deter them from an example so fatal, will not be without its effect. But the matter must not rest here. There is yet an higher, and a much more awakening point, in which the doctrine of revolutions ought to be regarded; and which would be an injustice

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to the subject not to attend to ; I mean considered, as the *visitation of God*.

They who confine their attention to second causes, may probably fancy they see enough to reconcile every event in the world, to common operations. Our little philosophers, to whose microscopic eye, it would be an affront to ascribe dimness of perception, will I know reprobate the idea, of referring into a particular Providence, the ordination of human affairs. But I am not disposed to argue with sceptics. I do not consider myself, as addressing the members of that impious and foolish convention, whose avowed sentiments of Atheism by one of the body, received the sanction and approbation of the whole. But I consider myself as speaking to characters, I trust in God, of a very different complexion ; the fundamental principles of whose religious faith, is founded in the firm persuasion, that *there is a God which judgeth the earth*. And if there be a God which judgeth the earth ; it cannot be the question of a moment, but that, that judgment involves in its comprehension, all the events, both of individuals and of society. Hence therefore it will follow, that so grand and momentous an occurrence in the annals of mankind, as the revolution in France ; cannot possibly be the effect of fortuitous

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tous causes, but must have originated in His all-wise decrees, *who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.** Admitting the truth of this position, the subject we have been considering rises in seriousness, assumes a more awful form, and demands our attention, in a yet more animated, and awakened manner.

Without entering into the minutia of the argument, and endeavoring to account for the probable causes of this divine judgment, on the French nation; men of seriousness and religion, will easily be enabled to trace the disorder to its source, and connect the crime with the punishment. It can require indeed, no eagle eye of observation, in beholding the history of a People so corrupt in every department, both in church and state, as the kingdom of France was, in the season of their visitation; to be convinced, that they were ripe for correction.

But when the mind hath sufficiently contemplated the state of that people, as they were found in religion and morals, when the scourge of God was sent among them and been satisfied of the cause; the transition from the view of that coun-

* Dan. iv. 35.

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try, to this, seems to be unavoidable; and in the consciousness of our multiplied offences, and ingratitude, and rebellion, against God; it is hardly possible to avoid trembling, from the apprehension of similar events befalling us. There is a measure of iniquity no doubt which prescribes the duration of kingdoms. How far this measure is nearly filled in the instance of our country I know not; and if I did, it becomes me not to say. But when a nation is verging, to the most extreme point of corruption in its morals; and a departure from the purity of religious principles, keeps pace with it: when pride, and sensuality, and a general profligacy of manners, taints every order, pervades the whole mass, and runs through all the departments of social life: when at the time the *judgments of God are in the earth*, instead of *learning righteousness*, and turning to him with repentance and amendment; men become more insensible and hardened: and in proportion as the danger increases, human confidence waxeth bolder; and strength is sought for, in the policy of man, rather than in the arm of God: When symptoms so alarming appear in the body politic, there is then reason to fear, the disorder hath risen to its height; the spots of death are upon it, and without some speedy and gracious interposition, we may very safely conclude, its dissolution is near.

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To enter into a particular relation of our sinfulness as a people, would be as painful, as it would be invidious. And it can be no pleasure to any feeling mind, to lay open the shame of his country. All I desire to infer, from the consciousness of national unworthiness is, that if France is now smarting under the rod of God, for her sins and iniquities; we can have no reason to hope, that we shall escape with impunity. It would be the blindest partiality indeed to suppose, that her transgressions have been more numerous, or attended with greater aggravations than ours. Alas! the reverse! There is not a nation under the sun, whose motives to obedience, and gratitude, have been more abundant: not one perhaps, which hath been equally undutiful, and regardless. If France then, be under such an awful scourge for her conduct, has not England reason to tremble, with apprehensions? And are there in the face of these things, men so void of feeling, as to speak with indifference, nay even with a kind of satisfaction, in the prospect of so calamitous an event as a revolution? Can the bare possibility be supposed, that the present troubles in France are the effect of divine displeasure; and yet shall we contemplate with composure similar evils hovering over this land? Is not this absolutely defying the judgments of the Almighty, and bidding Omnipotence

potence to do his worst? Gracious Lord! pity the blindness of such men. Avert in mercy, their infatuated and mistaken desires; and give them not over to their own delusions. *Wherefore should the heathen say, where now is their God?*

While with all possible deference, I would address these serious reflections, to the consideration of my Countrymen in general; there is one class of the people, to whom I would in a more especial, and particular manner desire to recommend them; I mean *the Orthodox Dissenters of the Kingdom*. I confess myself very anxious, to conciliate the favor, of that very respectable body of men, upon the present occasion; and I should wish above all things, to interest their prayers, in behalf of our common Zion.

Your late application to Parliament, for a repeal of the *Test Act*, and your want of success in that particular; have caused some weak, and injudicious minds, incautiously to conclude, that you are unfriendly to the establishment. And from a total misapprehension, of the causes of your separation from the church, they have taken for granted that a revolution in this country, (which of course by overthrowing the system altogether, would more effectually answer all the purposes of

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the proposed repeal,) could not but be highly gratifying to your feelings. But the idea is as ungenerous, as the reason on which the whole is founded, is false and mistaken. Had they known the real causes, for which your Fathers first seceded from the establishment; they would have given them, and you, the credit, of being actuated by purer motives. And they would have understood, that the departure, did not originate as much in aversion to the Church doctrines, as to the Church discipline. But among those, who are better apprized, both of the reasons of your separation from the establishment, and the great object which the serious part of your community had in view, in your application to Parliament for a repeal of the Test Act; they are convinced, that neither the one, nor the other, have in any manner tended, to make you unfriendly to the constitution.

I do not presume to argue upon the propriety of the Test Act, or of any other religious fence, which may be thrown up to the preservation of the church. But it becomes a question of some considerable consequence in the argument, before any alteration in the present system of things in this Country should be admitted; whether the proposed reform could be certainly productive of good? Supposing the Test Act had been repealed;

ed; nay supposing that the national establishment itself was destroyed; would such events contribute, more effectually to the promotion of godliness in the land? Is it a fact that those happy consequences have followed the annihilation of the national form of religion in France? Do we find that men are more serious, in their pursuit of piety and virtue, in that Country now, when all restraints are removed, and when every man is left to follow the imagination of his own heart?

The act of toleration, is at once the happiest plan, of human policy, which could be devised, to afford liberty of conscience, and as far as the purposes of religion are concerned, it is impossible that any freedom can more effectually forward its interest. The Church of England while enjoying her own peculiar doctrines unmolested, shelters under her indulgent wing, that free exercise of worship to every sectary. And it were absurd to suppose, that if the superiority she possesses, from her connexion with the state, was thrown down, the different denomination of Christians would receive benefit from it. It might induce a contest for preeminence, but it would not bring about a coalition of interests, or induce a greater harmony of sentiments. How (for example) would the jarring and irreconcileable te-

nets, of the *Trinitarian*, and the *Socinian*, be the better adjusted? Could their principles ever coalesce? Would they meet together for the purpose of divine worship in the same place? Or in short, could any plan be adopted, to promote a general benevolence of character among all, more than what now operates, from the gentle and accommodating spirit of the laws, in the universal freedom of conscience afforded in religious matters? It will be contended perhaps by *some*, that a reform in the discipline of the church is needed; and by *others*, that this reformation is required in its doctrines. But without observing, how impossible it must be, amidst the demand of such very opposite interests, and expectations, to do that, which shall please either; it should be observed, that the question is not, whether a reformation is necessary in the establishment; but whether there shall be *any* establishment? Not whether the church shall be repaired, but whether the fabric itself shall be destroyed? Men of no religion, or morals, may rejoice in the prospect of annihilating *all* systems, both human and divine; and from the introduction of anarchy into a state, may fondly hope, that "*the age of reason*" as they are pleased to call it, but more justly might be denominated *the age of infidelity* will undermine, and at length destroy, **every principle of revelation.** But the

the orthodox Dissenters may do well to consider, (and it is them that I am now particularly addressing) how far *their* interests will be promoted, in the subversion of all order; or a prospect of amendment to their wishes, of greater freedom, shall take place, from the coercive measures of a revolution?

I would advance one step further in the argument, and observe, that the principles of your creed, teaches you to recognize a divine hand, in every ordination of his Providence. And if a revolution be brought about in this country, it certainly originates with him and comes fraught with a commission to punish. Under this awakening conviction, can any man, be his conscious rectitude whatever it may, or the moral turpitude of the great mass of people ever so glaring, desire such a visitation? Could he make it the subject of prayer to God, and say, *Lord, send thy judgments upon this guilty land, and subvert the present order of things by a revolution.* And if this would not be the proper subject of prayer, could it be the proper wish of the heart?

Forgive, I pray, the freedom of these suggestions. I beg you to believe, they originate in the purest motives; and it is the very furthest from my in-

tention to offend. I reverence and respect your order, and consider it among the advantages of situation, to have the happiness of living with many of you, in the habits of friendship. I am anxious also (as I said before) to conciliate your affection, upon the present occasion, and to obtain your prayers for our Country. And suffer me to add; these duties are indispensable. For if Israel of old was commanded even when in an enemies country to *seek the peace of the city*, whither the Lord had caused him to be carried away captive, and to pray unto the Lord for it with a promise that in the peace of it he should have peace: And if the apostle Paul, expressly enjoined that *prayers and intercession and giving of thanks should be made for all men, for Kings and all that are in authority*, for the express purpose, that the professors of christianity, might lead *quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*; And the Apostle commanded this, at a time, when heathens, were the Princes to be prayed for, and christians, were under the government of Idolaters; judge, I pray you, how infinitely strengthened is the precept, to all those highly favored characters, who live under the fullest, and most complete Toleration, and in a country where the *Kings of it* are literally the *nursing Fathers*, and the *Queens the nursing Mothers* to the

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Church of Christ, under every form by which it is distinguished !

But while I assume this freedom with my Brethren of the *Diffenters* ; I hope I may no less solicit the attention of the *Clergy of the establishment* to the same important subject, peculiarly as it concerns persons of their sacred order.

It will hardly be denied, but that extraordinary occasions may occur, in every situation of public life which shall demand a more than ordinary regard to the principles of conduct under them ; and when the crisis is peculiarly interesting, (as in the present instance,) a greater freedom of address, in pointing to the regulation of behaviour necessary, may be with more propriety assumed.

While with great chearfulness, I would pay due respect, to the many very meritorious characters, among the Clergy of the establishment ; whose application to the duties of their order ; and whose shining talents displayed in defending the faith, have reflected a lustre on the church to which they belong ; I cannot at the same time but behold, with painful regret, some things in the order, which hang as a portentous weight, upon the interests of religion, and will I am persuaded,

be among the causes, to break down the present system, if ever such an event should take place in this country.

That I may not offend, where in order to be regarded, I must first obtain, the indulgence of a favorable hearing, I shall only venture to touch, and that slightly, upon one or two leading points, in which if I mistake not, the clerical character, in the present day, is highly reprehensible. It is notoriously known, that the Church of England, in all her forms, and offices of worship, professes to be guided by the inspired word, and to derive her sole authority from thence. And her ministers no less, by their solemn and deliberate subscription, to the doctrines of her liturgy, are supposed, to be most perfectly convinced of the truth, in which it is founded, and disposed to act accordingly. Under these circumstances, it becomes a very serious, and a very awful Question; from whence, or by what unhappy fatality it is, that so sad a departure, from the professed faith of the Church, should distinguish, by far the greater part of the Sermons, delivered by the Clergy, both from the pulpit, and the press. The fact itself is undeniable, and even the common people in the present enlightened hour, are no strangers to it. Will it be said, by way of extenuation,

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that the Clergy consider subscription, merely as a necessary admission into the Church, and therefore comply with it *pro forma*? Is it possible, that any man of integrity, can take shelter from so wretched a subterfuge? No one, I am persuaded, of any character, would act thus, in the circumstances of common life. A man of any moral honesty, would hardly think himself justified, after pledging his word, to swerve from it. And wherefore Subscription in religion, should be less sacred and inviolable, than the fidelity to be observed, between Man, and Man, is difficult to say. Can any human being suppose, that to equivocate, in our dealings with each other, would be more faulty, than prevarication with God? And shall a man tremble to swear falsely, in a court of justice, and yet feel no apprehension, in braving the Almighty, with deliberately subscribing to what he believes not to be true? According to every Conception, I am able to entertain, of right, and wrong, the conduct of the Clergy, who preach contrary to the doctrines of the establishment they profess, becomes wholly inexcusable, and is not to be apologized for, by any artifice, or evasion, whatever. For on the supposition, that the liturgy of the Church, according to their ideas, be *not* founded on the scriptures, it is irreconcileable with common sense, that any

honest man, could conscientiously make his subscription to it. And if it *be*, how is it, that any Minister even in a single instance, dares to swerve from it ? In either case, there is a duplicity and of the worst kind, neither can I see, by what shadow of excuse, any moral man, can reconcile it to himself. But whatever the pretences may be, the matter is too glaring to be denied. And the Effects of it are sensibly felt in religion. They become not indeed, more fatal to the peace of the true christian, than they afford matter of derision, to the infidel. For while the *former*, mourns in secret, in finding the morality of *Epicetus*, too often issuing from our pulpits, in the place of evangelical truths: the *latter*, is encouraged to make a jest of all religion, from beholding such duplicity in its teachers. How far the bold, and hitherto unparalleled attacks of scepticism, with which the writings of the present day abound, may be ascribed to this source may not perhaps be easily determined. But should it please the providence of God, for the punishment of a guilty people, to permit the Infidel for a while to triumph; should the divine sword, which now seems to be drawing from its scabbard, be wholly unsheathed, and receive the awful commission, “*go through the land;*” methinks the clergy I advert to, will above all men, hear the solemn voice accompanying

accompanying it, speaking in louder, and more alarming terrors in their ears, "*Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this?*"

The pressing claims which the present interesting crisis have upon the Clergy, might be heightened, under several other points of view, and the appeal therefrom, more strongly enforced. In such seasons, it might be expected, from those who minister in Holy things, that a more than ordinary attention, would be manifested in every part of their conduct; and since places of pleasure and amusement, and the customs and manners of the world, are at all times highly unsuitable to their sacred function; we should now, naturally expect to behold, somewhat more immediately striking, to distinguish from the great mass of mankind, the Teachers of a self-denying religion. But I forbear to enlarge these topics. If what I have already observed, should happily attract the regard, and induce the seriousness of reflection, in those to whom it is addressed; I shall obtain all, that I wish from what hath been said, and may God give a blessing to it.

In the prospect of national evils, rendered probable from national transgressions, a large scope

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opens, for addressing the various characters and situations, which make up social life. And it is very obvious, with what advantage the interesting topic here treated of, would enable me to make a particular appeal to every one. But leaving this application of our subject to every man's conscience, in the sight of God, I shall only desire, to add one word, by way of consolation, to that handful of people, however scattered through the Kingdom, or however diversified, among the various denominations of true Christians, who are anticipating in their minds, the divine judgments coming upon the earth, and are imploring in secret, the Lord to be favourable, to a guilty land,

Whatever shall be the event of this humble appeal, to the people at large, I know, and am persuaded, there is this small remnant of God's faithful Servants, still among us, who will regard, what hath been said, with whom the welfare of our Country is dear, and who will require no arguments from me, to remember its interests in their daily prayers. It is in the piety of such men, the permanency and well-doing, of all Kingdoms exist. Neither do I scruple to say, that there is more real confidence, and security, in *their* prayers, than in all our fleets and armies. Go on, gracious Men, in your labor of love. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,*

salem, they shall prosper that love thee ; Peace be within her walls, and plenteousness within her palaces. However unknown, or unnoticed, by the World, you are in everlasting remembrance with God ; and your prayers, come up for a memorial before him. And even, should your petitions prove ineffectual ; should wrath be determined from God, upon this land ; yet your own interests, are everlastingly secured, and placed above the reach of every contingency. Whatever apprehensions you may entertain, for your Country, you need not, you ought not indeed, to cherish the least apprehension for yourselves. *Your life is hid with Christ in God. Fear not any evil tidings, while your heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

